Ellen Squier

Dr. Wolf

Teaching Secondary Music

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Defense for Music Education

The Department of Education states that their “mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.” Most school districts’ Mission statements build on this foundation. It is the goal of American Schools to give all students a well-rounded, excellent education, so they may enter the 21st century global community as contributors and leaders in their society. I believe music is an essential element to meeting these goals of education.

Music surrounds our daily lives; arguably, more than any other school subject, certainly unique from other areas of study. It is a subject worthy of life-long academic study, and yet it has the ability, even the nature, to touch us directly and personally. Throughout history and in every culture music has been found. It is basic to human culture. Music is communal – it draws people together. Look around the world, or even just in America; every culture has its own music that shapes their identity and values. Studying music not only helps students learn about others’ culture and values around the world, but also about themselves. Music is personal – it identifies deeply within us. It can change emotions, lift souls in worship, allow expression where words do not suffice, give joy, move one physically, comfort hearts, offer repose in a hectic life, show beauty. Music is creative – it offers students an outlet to express themselves. They can learn to express their full range of emotions, ideas, and thoughts in a healthy constructive way. Music develops life skills – discipline, listening, confidence, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation (Partnership for 21st Century Skills). As students study and perform music in ensemble and individually, these skills are developed as an intrinsic part of the musical learning process.

As music commands such an important role in our daily life, music education should be available to all students as part of a high school’s core curriculum. Elementary school academia lays a foundation on which secondary school students assimilate and solidify their learning. To end a student’s music education in middle school would be a great disservice to their development.

My goal in music education is to teach students to be able to create music independently and corporately, to teach the formal concepts of music and connections to history, culture, and other disciplines, to develop life skills, and to impart a life-long love and value for music. I want to meet each student at their ability level, and challenge them to reach new expertise.

# Works Cited

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